

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

Minutes of Meeting 91-1
of the
Engineering and Computer Science Faculty Council
held
Friday, March 15, 1991

Present: Professors M.N.S. Swamy (Chair), M.O. Ahmad, V.S. Alagar, A.E. Blach, E.J. Doedel, A. Elhakeem, T. Fancott, D. Feldman, F.D. Hamblin, A.M. Hanna, C. Lam, G. Martin, H.J. McQueen, O. Moselhi, M.O.M. Osman, R.V. Patel, O.A. Pekau, E.I. Plotkin, H.B. Poorooshasb, T. Stathopoulos, G.H. Vatistas, P.D. Ziogas; Dr. R. Sheinin, Vice Rector, Academic; Ms. L. Prendergast (Registrar's Rep.); Ms. Lee Harris (Library); Frank Pathyil (ECA), Guy Vezina (ECA), John Lyons (ECSCGA); P.M. Bourassa (Secretary).

Absent with apology: T.D. Bui, P.P. Fazio, P.N. Seneviratne, Caroline Renaud, Vicky Ethier.

Visitors: Dr. M.E. Szabo, Dean of Graduate Studies; Professors R.B. Bhat, R.M. Cheng, T. Krepec, T. Radhakrishnan, A.S. Ramamurthy, A.J. Saber.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Before submitting the published agenda for adoption, Dr. Swamy called on the Secretary to read out the corrections to be made to the numbering. Actually, the present meeting should have been numbered 91-1, and the minutes to be approved are those of Meeting 90-6.

Motion 91-1-1 Subject to the above corrections, the published agenda was approved unanimously.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of Meeting 90-6

It was brought to the attention of the Secretary that two names were missing from the list of members who were present, and that one name was misspelled.

Motion 91-1-2 Subject to the above corrections, Council unanimously adopted a motion to approve the minutes of Meeting 90-6.

3. Chairman's Remarks

Dr. Swamy welcomed Dr. R. Sheinin, Vice Rector, Academic, Dr. M.E. Szabo, Dean of Graduate Studies, as well as the faculty members who came as visitors to the present meeting.

He reported that Senate approved the creation of an Inter-University Research Group in High Performance Computer Architecture and VLSI, as recommended by Council at its previous meeting.

Dr. Swamy also reported that the total value of grants awarded by NSERC to members of this Faculty amounts to \$2.767 million, a slight increase over the previous year, even though the overall total of NSERC grants has decreased.

4. Review of the Division of Graduate Studies

Dr. Swamy asked Dr. Fancott to present to Council the Position Paper prepared by the Engineering and Computer Science Graduate Studies Committee as a response to the Report dated October 24, 1990 on the Review of the Division of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Fancott first described the composition of ECGSC, which includes a member from each Department, elected by the faculty members of that Department; the Chair is elected by the full-time faculty members of the whole Faculty. The members may or may not be the Graduate Program Director of the Department. There are also two graduate student members. An Associate Dean regularly attends the meetings of ECGSC.

Dr. Fancott then explained how the Position Paper was developed. ECGSC met three times to produce this document. The drafts that it prepared were also sent to the Executive Committee, which groups the Dean, the Associate and Assistant Deans and the Chairs of the five Departments (including the Director of the Centre for Building Studies) and referred to the Departments for discussion at the Department meetings. The GPD's who are not members of ECGSC were invited to the meetings where this document was discussed.

There is a strong graduate program in this Faculty. Its members will look favorably on any move to improve graduate studies. Inter-action with the Division of Graduate Studies is considered important.

There are two aspects to the report issued by the Committee to Review the Division of Graduate Studies.

- 1- individual recommendations;
- 2- the restructuring of the Division of Graduate Studies.

ECGSC and others who were consulted within this Faculty find it disturbing that the Task Force of Senate is to be involved only after the restructuring has been decided upon. It is their opinion that decisions having such far-reaching effects on the operations of the University should not be made outside its legislative structure. The legislative process of this University normally involves input of the Faculties in the formal sense.

The Report is therefore considered as having been prepared for the information of the Vice Rector, and as being valid as input to the work of a properly constituted committee of Senate.

Many recommendations can be implemented with the existing structure still in place. Therefore, the necessity of a new structure should not be based on those recommendations.

The conclusions of the Position Paper were formulated by ECGSC and take into consideration the opinions of the Executive Committee and of the Departments. Of the 26 recommendations, 20 could be implemented under the present structure of DGS. Of the remaining ones, there are two which are rejected: recommendations 16 and 21.

Dr. Fancott having completed his presentation, the Chair opened the discussion on Position Paper.

Dr. Osman said that he received the October 24, 1990 Report in January. He considers it a very serious document which can affect the University. As a matter of principle, proposals which have such far-reaching implications must be generated through a fair process respecting academic freedom. The committees issuing these proposals should be elected and composed of people who are respecting the wishes of the Faculty. If the document under consideration is to be considered as simply the Vice Rector's report, her confirmation of this would clarify the situation.

Dr. Sheinin answered that the Report is not from the Vice Rector but to the Vice Rector. It is normal to have periodic appraisals of units. The individuals on the committee were selected on the basis of their general commitment to graduate studies; they do not represent any

Faculty. Its terms of reference were to examine the current state of graduate studies at this University, examine the authority of the Division of Graduate studies and make suggestions as to how to bring about an improvement. As to those who are puzzled concerning how the committee was formed, all the documentation is available to anyone who wants to read it. The committee members are people who have vast experience in graduate studies. The Vice Rector then suggested that Council should hear from Dr. Szabo.

Dr. Szabo first pointed out that the Dean of Graduate Studies is the recipient of the Report, not its creator. However, it reflects comments that he made. He then suggested that, rather than focus on the process by which the Report was created, Council should concentrate on building bridges between this Faculty and the rest of the University. The present Division of Graduate Studies was never formally constituted: it came about by a stroke of the pen. He added that it is important to create an enabling body which cuts across Faculty boundaries. Finally, Dr. Szabo remarked that the Position Paper notes that Recommendation 3, which suggests that "the Dean of Graduate Studies be represented on the Councils of all Faculties" could be implemented immediately. However, he is not a member of this Council, even though he asked to become one about a year ago.

Dr. Osman then said that he was surprised that the Vice Rector overlooked the main point of his intervention, and did not respond to the point of principle which was raised, namely, that such appraisal committees should be elected and not appointed. This is particularly important in view of the fact that this Report proposes major changes; however, it is not clear as to how these recommendations came about. The Vice Rector has called upon a group of people of her choice to produce a report which can have far reaching effects on this Faculty.

Dr. Sheinin answered that the actual structure will be dealt with by a date-limited Task Force of Senate.

Dr. Fancott said that, from the "De jure" point of view, the Vice Rector's position is impeccable. Our problem is that "De jure" is flexible ground in this University. However, from the "De facto" point of view, the Report is a blockbuster. It carries a lot of recommendations, some of which can have far reaching implications. Some things are not well defined and this puts us in the face of a large unknown. The Graduate Studies Division is not a unit like any other which could be appraised independently. It affects other units. He added that the most disturbing thing is the recommendation for setting up a date-limited Task Force in the absence of a structured input. As a reply to Dr. Szabo,

he concluded that crossing boundaries is a great idea but he is not sure that it requires such a big re-structure.

Dr. Ahmad said that in this Faculty, we have done extremely well under the present structure. If other Faculties did not do as well, it is not due to the structure.

Dr. Poorooshab objected to Dr. Osman's use of the words "people of her choice" when speaking of the committee which produced the Report. It may imply that she did not have the University's best interests in mind. Dr. Osman answered that he merely meant that the committee should have been elected rather than appointed.

Dr. McQueen commented that a number of recommendations in the Report do not seem to fit the operations of this Faculty. The overall effect would be to create a new Faculty with a comprehensive super-structure and this would divert resources away from present needs of existing Faculties.

Dr. Saber asked whether the Report is a working document rather than a position document.

Dr. Sheinin answered that she is not sure of the exact definitions of the terminology used by Dr. Saber. She understands that within Faculties and Departments there is no distinction between graduate and undergraduate studies. The Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science provides a model for the University as a whole. However, her job is to look at the University as a whole: other parts of the University are not as well developed. She has this major concern that Concordia is not strongly recognized as a graduate university. The committee identifies the present structure as a major problem. Details will be a Senate process. She concluded that the Report presents a position but it is also a working document.

Dr. Saber agreed that graduate studies are strong in this Faculty but weak in the University as a whole. However, he added, committees which suggest changes to policy should be elected, rather than appointed.

Dr. Sheinin said that the Report is going to Senate. This Faculty will have the opportunity to elect members to the Task Force. She added that the goal of the review is not to destroy or to invade the turf of others; it is to develop an appraisal of where Concordia is. She then asked this Faculty to do something for the University: examine the Report from the point of view of advancing the whole university.

Dr. Pekau said that there was a special meeting of the Civil Engineering Department to look at the Report. It was discussed in detail. The meeting came to the conclusion that it supports the Position Paper issued by ECGSC. It also made some suggestions. Changes which would raise the profile of graduate studies at Concordia would be beneficial. In this line of thought, why not create the position of Vice Rector, Research and Graduate Studies? Dr. Pekau added that there is concern that, with the changes recommended in the Report, we would have a separation between graduate and undergraduate studies and that the Academic Deans would become Deans of undergraduate studies. Dr. Pekau also felt that such 'appraisal committees' should be elected rather than appointed and he asked for the Vice Rector's view on this.

Dr. Sheinin answered that the concept that the creation of a School of Graduate Studies would separate graduate studies from undergraduate studies is a fallacious one. At the level of the Faculties and Departments, accountability and responsibilities are over the whole spectrum of graduate and undergraduate studies. The two reinforce each other. It is understood that graduate programs can only arise in the minds of faculty members who do research and develop graduate courses. Nowhere in the Report is there an explicit or implied suggestion that Faculty Deans would become Deans of undergraduate studies. No unit in this University is given responsibility for graduate studies. The Division of Graduate Studies and its Dean have, in spite of this, done remarkable things. The University will be at a disadvantage if we don't put our act together. Some professors, she said, have a misunderstanding of what a university is.

Dr. Sheinin added that, while Dr. Pekau's job is to do battle for Civil Engineering, hers is to do battle for the whole University. She would be glad to describe the issues confronting us at this University. What is bad for one element of the University is bad for all.

Dr. Sheinin did not respond to the second question asked by Dr. Pekau regarding elected committees for such appraisals.

Dr. Szabo said that Concordia is an anomaly in having as many as 3,500 graduate students and no School of Graduate Studies.

Motion
91-1-3

Professor Hamblin suggested that it is now time to have a Motion on the floor and moved that this Council accept the ECGSC Position Paper as the Faculty's response to the Report on the Review of the Division of Graduate Studies, and forward it to Senate.

This Motion was seconded and declared open for discussion.

Dr. Sheinin said that she assumed that the Graduate Studies endeavour would be supported by a consensus. It is perhaps a reflection of the problems at Concordia that this is being discussed. She added that there are major discussions in Canada as to what a university is, what and who should be funded. A Royal Society document suggests that universities be ranked on the basis of faculty participation in research. Concordia has to be placed in a greater context. She concluded that individuals and units have to get their minds off themselves.

Dr. Fancott said that the faculty members in Engineering and Computer Science are not arguing against changes in the organization of graduate studies; they are open and willing to co-operate. What they are discussing is the delegation of authority, the process and the ad hoc manner in which major changes are being initiated. He added that ad hoc does not work in a large unit. There must be formal input from the Faculty. This would not be provided by the proposed Task Force. If Senate constitutes such a sub-committee, it will appoint it from its own members. What is important is that members be elected from the Faculties so that there be formal input from them.

Dr. Stathopoulos said that he welcomes the Vice Rector's interest in graduate studies. He added that the fact that this Faculty has strong graduate programs does not mean that it has neither needs nor problems. One of the main concerns is that the proposed re-structuring might work against strong programs such as those of our Faculty. Resources are limited and there is a danger that, by trying to help other Faculties, the overall result might be negative for our programs. He added that there are strong doubts as to whether more centralization would help. At the Centre for Building Studies, faculty members would like units to have more power and freedom in administering the graduate programs rather than going the other way. There is particular concern about Recommendations 2 and 4. What they mean is not clearly stated in the Report. There is also concern about the Report going directly to Senate rather than first having Council's recommendations go back to the committee which issued the Report. This implies that the Report is a position rather than a working document.

Dr. Cheng appreciated and welcomed the leadership demonstrated by the Vice-Rector, Academic, in her efforts to improve the status of Concordia University. He noted that this Faculty is not apprehensive about changes, since in fact it has been continually evolving during the past 25 years or so. However, one must keep in mind the process with which this Faculty introduces changes. We probably have a different

culture than other universities. One has to reckon with this in order to be successful in implementing changes. Consequently, plans for improvement should be based on what we have, which has by and large been serving the Faculty well, rather than based on something that is simply plugged in. While certain structures may be successful in some great schools, we do not necessarily have to conform without taking note of the circumstances prevalent in Concordia. As for the benefits of the University as a whole, Dr. Cheng said that the Vice Rector can be assured that this Faculty is not at all parochial. We are prepared to help out even if we are called upon to sacrifice some resources for the common good. However, the re-structuring as proposed may disrupt the progress of the University. It may even result in "averaging down" rather than "averaging up". While we can accept quite a number of the recommendations as proposed in the document, we plead caution on others, especially Recommendations 2 and 4.

Dr. McQueen said that the Report contains two categories of recommendations: he agrees with the Position Paper that some of them could be implemented now, but he has reservations about some others which have to be more closely examined. He added that the 5th paragraph of the Conclusions to the Position Paper is poorly worded and he suggested some minor changes which were immediately agreed to. However, when he suggested a re-structuring of the format of the Position Paper, he did not obtain the required support.

Dr. Bhat said that two things are coming out of the discussion. What the Report aims at is both a change in substance and a change in image. If there is only a question of substance, the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science can be a model for the whole University. If it is a change of image then a decision has to be made as to what should be done. Structural changes may not be necessary at all. Before making structural changes, we must ask questions such as: Is there anything wrong with the present structure? What are its weak points? How are they to be addressed?

Dr. Szabo said that there is not that much change in what is proposed in the Report. There is a vacuum right now. The intention of the Report is to create an environment where there are clear rights and responsibilities. The aim of the Report is to create rather than change a structure.

Dr. Sheinin said that she sees no difference in graduate programs and in the role of Faculties and Departments in developing these programs if the Report's recommendations are adopted. What is lacking is a body with overall responsibility for graduate studies and which is

responsible to Senate. Such a body is lacking, it is simply not there. The existing structure was adopted when the University was very small. There is no one who has responsibility for the advancement of graduate studies within the University. She added that she can only ascribe the present lack of confidence to unfortunate past experience. Therefore, she can only assure Council that it is not the way in which she works. There has to be an act of faith that she would not do anything which would harm this Faculty.

Dr. Swamy said that this Faculty is not afraid of change, but would like to have clear reasons for change and consequences of these changes before they are made. Engineers normally want to design, simulate and test a bridge before building it. The graduate studies development in this Faculty has not been ad hoc. Its professors have worked very hard. They are not opposed to the development of graduate studies. They also agree that a university is not built on a single Faculty and that it is not sufficient for it to dispense knowledge: it must also create knowledge.

Dr. Krepec said that the responsibility for a graduate student is presently shared between the student's Supervisor, the Chair of the Department, the Graduate Program Director, the Dean of the Faculty and the Division of Graduate Studies. What is being proposed is a centralized system. Having had, from working 20 years on Poland, first hand knowledge of how a centralized system works, he cannot help being concerned about the results that the Report's recommendations would bring.

Dr. Sheinin commented that one must pick up one's responsibility where indicated.

Dr. Krepec suggested that, if the Vice Rector must impose a system, why not impose the system that has been successfully used by this Faculty over many years.

The question was then called. The vote was unanimous in favour of calling the question.

Motion 91-1-3 was carried by a vote of 17 in favour, one against and no abstention.

Dr. Osman stated that since the Vice Rector now knows the difference between a working and a position document, he wants to move that the Vice Rector declare the Report to be a working rather than a position document. The Dean ruled this motion out of order since he

felt that this Report is directed to the Vice Rector and this Faculty Council cannot entertain such a motion.

The following Motion was then proposed and seconded:

Motion 91-1-4 **Whereas** ECFC has studied the document distributed by the Vice Rector, Academic entitled: *The Review of the Division of Graduate Studies, October 24, 1990,*

and
has forwarded to the Vice Rector the comments in the document *Engineering and Computer Science Faculty Council Report on The Review of the Division of Graduate Studies, October 24, 1990,*

and
is determined to fully participate in any process involving the revision of the present structure of graduate studies,

be it moved that

this council recommends to Senate that the organization of graduate studies at Concordia University be considered by a properly constituted committee of Senate, with elected representation from each Faculty, recognizing the size of existing graduate programs. This committee shall formally consult the Faculties during its study, and its report shall be submitted to the Faculty councils before being presented to Senate. It shall consider first the need for re-structuring, and then the organizational details of the new structure, if necessary. The details of the revised organization should be completed before the report is submitted to the Faculties.

This Motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

Motion 91-1-5 Dr. Osman then proposed a Motion recommending to the Senate that in the future, such appraisal committees for the "Division of Graduate Studies" or the Faculties be comprised of elected rather than appointed members, just as is done for the appointment of Academic Deans, and that these committees work in consultation with the Faculties.

This Motion was seconded and carried by a vote of 20 in favour, one against and no abstention.

5. Adjournment

Motion Council unanimously adopted a motion to adjourn.
91-1-6